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VOL.
16

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM
YEAR TO YEAR

All the Year Round

a
Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

PART 89.

PRICE
ELEVENPENCE.

1876.

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WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 383. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 1876.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

PHOEBE: GIRL AND WIFE.

BY PERCY FITZGERALD,

AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN," "THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XIV. PUT TO THE QUESTION.

A QUARTER of an hour went by; then half an hour; then an hour. The carriage still waited. Phœbe wept and wept again. Suddenly she was roused by the matron touching her.

"You are to come at once to the study; they want you."

This going to and coming from the study was the part of this probation that most of all chilled Phœbe's heart. It was more awful than the being placed in the dock itself. But she was now so stunned and bewildered by repeated strokes, that she felt but little. The matron added carelessly:

"Your mother has arrived!"

That roused her like a trumpet. All her troubles were forgotten in the prospect of seeing her dear, darling mamma. Here was rescue, light, comfort. She was no longer the poor, unfriended, persecuted outcast.

"Where is she? Take me to her. Do take me to mamma!" she cried. "She'll protect me!"

Space became, as it were, annihilated. She never knew how she traversed those long, gaunt corridors and passages, which, in public institutions, lead to the tribunals and seats of authority. But the next scene was the room itself, filled with what seemed to be a crowd, with many faces—the Dean's, Miss Cooke's—and, above all, the dear familiar one of her mother. In an instant she was on her neck.

Apart from the crowd, and in the centre of the room, stood Adelaide, cold and

statue-like. Phœbe's entrance had, it seemed, interrupted her.

"Now," she was saying, "I have told you the whole, so far as it concerns myself. Let her deny it if she can."

Here she paused, and the Dean, with some embarrassment, took up the discourse.

"It seems," he said, addressing Phœbe, "that Miss Cross was the one who originally entered into this clandestine relation. She has come forward, I must say, fairly enough, when she found that another was likely to be punished. She adds, however, what gives a new turn to this painful business, that you, while affecting to aid her in these scandalous and most improper proceedings, succeeded in diverting this gentleman's attention to yourself; and that, secretly and unknown to her, you have been carrying on these clandestine communications for a long time."

Here Mrs. Dawson interposed.

"Well, and after all, my dear sir, what if she did? No harm has been done. Girls will be girls, you know."

"My good madam——" began the Dean, much shocked.

"My dear, good Miss Cooke," again interrupted the lady, "it is foolish of you to magnify these things into mountains. If it gets known, you will ruin your establishment. Mr. Dean here, who is a man of the world, will see that in a moment."

"But this has gone too far, madam," he replied, "quite too far, to be treated in that way. You see there is a certain responsibility for Miss Cooke here——"

"Oh, nonsense," said the lady. "I'm sure Lady Mary Brixton—whom Mrs. Drinkwater knows very well—would be

dreadfully put out about it, and take away her girls the first thing. It's a foolish lark, as they call it. Better say no more about it, you know."

The Dean seemed a little irresolute, but Miss Cooke had a good deal of the Puritan in the cause of propriety and decorum. She would saw off the branch, even though she herself was seated upon it.

"It cannot be compromised," she said, trembling with agitation, "even though I have to shut up my school. As the matter stands, Miss Cross seems to be guilty, but Miss Phoebe Dawson infinitely more guilty. If there is any indulgence to be extended, it should be to Miss Cross, who has come forward honourably to prevent another being punished."

Here Mrs. Dawson gathered her lace shawl about her, and said, angrily, "I could not believe you would be so ridiculous. If you will not hear common sense, you must put up with the consequences. I shall take care not to have my child disgraced before the world. Tomorrow is your field-day, or your exhibition-day, or whatever you call it—"

"We can't help parents being offended," said Miss Cooke, now beginning to take the matter into her own hands; "I must do my duty. For the last time, you have now an opportunity of clearing yourself, Miss Dawson. I conjure you, in Heaven's name, speak out and tell the truth!"

"I did it all for her," said Phoebe. "That's all I can say, if you kill me. Oh, it is shocking to accuse me in this way! How could I help his turning over to me? I so pitied her; and she was so anxious to get away from this place; and this was the only opportunity that offered."

The Dean shook his head.

"Oh, worse and worse! Now you throw it on the school! The letter, you see, unfortunately, does not fit with your explanation. There is no use trying these subterfuges. I fear it is too plain that, with your volatile character, you could not resist the foolish satisfaction of drawing away an admirer from another. I think we had better end the matter at once, and save further prevarication or falsehood."

Thus it was that Phoebe was tried and found guilty before an overwhelming weight of evidence. There stood her former friend Adelaide, with a cold and hostile look in her face.

Phoebe waited helplessly for sentence, when the gaze of Adelaide, fixed on her

with what seemed cold satisfaction, suddenly inspired her. She cried out:

"I see it now! I see it all! This is revenge. I am sure of it. I have offended her in some way, and she has confessed all this, only to put me more in the wrong, and she knows that I cannot explain it. If there was only some one to ask her questions—to take my part—I can't do it myself—"

At this unexpected dramatic burst, every one looked at each other. Even Adelaide was discomposed. Phoebe's mother, faithful as a gallant hen defending her chicken, fluttered forward:

"Yes, yes, my child," she cried, "you are right. Just look at that girl's face; she has some spite or grudge against her. Anyone can see it. Suppose the man did desert her, who can blame him? It's only natural. I leave it to anyone: which of the two is most attractive?"

So blunt a way of resolving the matter might have caused less excited bystanders to smile. The Dean shook his head. That sort of judgment of Paris would hardly do.

Adelaide glanced from one to the other with scorn and defiance. The more she was thus baited, the more some lurking, almost devilish, spirit of no surrender was asserting itself.

"The innocent! the poor innocent!" she said. "She is welcome to that help of being prettier and, perhaps, more artful. You may make the best of it for her. You, sir, will do me justice? I say, again, here are the facts: the letter, and her ways, and tricks—all underhand, mind, and unknown to me. Keep steadily to that, sir. You are judge here, and I call on you to do justice, as a minister of the Church, of which you are a deserving pillar."

This phrase of Shylock's might almost seem to have been a sneer; but Adelaide spoke with gravity and earnestness. The Dean was never so perplexed, and even harassed, in his life, not even at the memorable period when he had a turbulent and defiant curate, called Bolton, before him, who had nearly been his death.

"I declare," he said, "I don't know what to do among them all."

At this moment entered the licitor Corbett, with a card, which she laid down before the Dean:

"He's come in a chaise from the Red Lion, and says he wants to see Miss Cooke particularly."

"Oh, she can't see people now!" said

the Dean, impatiently. "We're busy here. Who is he? Pringle——"

"That's he!" almost screamed Phoebe. "Let him come up. He'll tell the truth. He's a gentleman. Now, we shall know everything; only let him come up!"

More and yet more bewildered, Adelaide turned pale and red, her lips trembling.

"Well, let him. I believe still we shall know the truth that way."

"Oh, this is the person, then?" said the Dean, adding, half to himself, "fons et origo, hem—— Well, I see no objection. Anything that will help us to an issue."

"Mind, though," said Adelaide, "that even if he support what she says, that is not conclusive. They were both engaged in this double dealing, and are likely to support each other. You must consider that."

"Oh, nonsense!" said the Dean.

"Why, you black-hearted girl," said Mrs. Dawson, "you are full of venom, and spite, and hatred, and ill-will. I tell you what," added the sensible lady, "you go and talk to him, Mr. Dean, and see what he has to say. You know the world. He'd only laugh at us, if he was brought into a room full of women like this."

"A very proper suggestion," said the Dean; and he rose up and left the room.

Adelaide Cross remained standing in the same attitude, but looking with some disquietude to the door. The absence was not long. In two or three minutes the Dean returned, entering hurriedly.

"It is all cleared up," he said, resuming his seat; "this unexpected testimony has helped us. The young man has spoken to me with very great propriety. He entirely exculpates Miss Dawson; he declares that she was all through acting for her friend. He confessed to me, with the greatest frankness, that he found himself attracted by Miss Phoebe, but that it was not until the last moment that she learned that she was the object of his attentions. He has fairly enough admitted to me that he has done very, very wrong. I am glad, very glad, that this painful case has taken such a turn."

Adelaide was still unmoved. But she said slowly, and with her old scorn:

"A lawyer would tell you that this evidence is of no value. It is merely the statement of one guilty person trying to screen the other."

"Oh! for shame!" said the Dean, rising. "I can't listen to this sort of

thing. I declare you are too bad. I'm afraid that you will turn out discredibly——"

"I!" said Adelaide, with infinite scorn. "Who gave you leave, pray, to utter prophecies about my life? What authority have you over me, or, for that matter, any one here? You dare not speak that way to your parsons—or, for that matter, even to your wife——"

"God bless me! Is she mad?" gasped the Dean, clutching the handles of his arm-chair.

"But, of course," went on Adelaide, "to a poor, friendless, outcast girl like me, you can be overbearing enough. Your feeble mind is well fitted to settle things of this kind among women. Men laugh at you!"

"Stop, stop!" said Miss Cooke, in horror; "take her out of the room."

The Dean, perfectly aghast, could only murmur, "Take her away—she is mad! Where are we? God bless me!"

And Miss Emma Cooke and the other licitor advanced and removed the prisoner.

"I fear that wretched girl will come to a bad end," said he, after a pause. "Well, let me see; we have done with this business now. Miss Cooke, I think you may now be satisfied, and act accordingly. Miss Dawson has been indiscreet, but she is entirely acquitted of the serious charge."

"It is too shocking," said the head of the house, much moved. "We were near committing a terrible injustice. Oh! that girl, on whom we have lavished such motherly kindness, to behave in such a fashion! But Phoebe, my child, you have been very foolish and indiscreet, and I hope it will be a lesson to you."

"Indeed, indeed, it will," said Phoebe, all in a flutter, like a prisoner whom the jury has just acquitted. "I'll do anything—everything——"

"My poor Phoebe," said her mother, fondly; "such a way to treat you. There is not an ounce of harm in her. She has too much spirit, that is all."

"Very well, very well," said the Dean, who was much put out by the insults he had received, "that will do now. Yes, you must take care in future. Then, there is nothing more to be done."

So the court broke up. But he never forgave either Miss Cooke, or the school, or Phoebe: the former he always spoke of as "a foolish, indiscreet old woman, that didn't know how to manage girls." Adelaide was ordered into confinement for

the day, until it was settled what could be done with her. A most embarrassing question—for it was easy to send for a chaise from the Red Lion, and put her and her trunks in it, but where that carriage was to take her was the question. She had no friends or relations known.

TRUFFLES.

TRUFFLES, like caviare, are things of which many talk who never saw or tasted them. And, even of those who have been lucky enough to sit down to a turkey stuffed with them, we fancy the majority have no notion how they grow or where they come from. Housekeepers, of course, know that they come in tins or capsuled bottles, from shops like Fortnum and Mason's, or Crosse and Blackwell's, and that they are about the dearest thing that can be had in the way of flavouring. But their knowledge usually ends there. People brought up in Wiltshire or Sussex may possibly, if they were given to chatting with the labouring men, have heard the tradition—for it is now little more than a tradition—of truffle-hunting, with dogs specially trained for the purpose, in the oak-coppices on the edge of the Weald, or in the broad woods that stretch from Longleat to Bruton. You may still meet an old smock-frocked fellow who knows all about truffles, and who remembers the time when people used to think they could make money by seeking for them. But the attempt has almost died out in England; and now certain parts of France are almost the only hunting-grounds where this strange underground mushroom is sought.

As with other benefactors of the human race, oblivion has been the lot of him who discovered the real truffle—"black diamond of modern gastronomy," as an enthusiastic Frenchman calls it. There is a white truffle, a poor tasteless sham, which grows abundantly in the sands of North Africa and Syria. This *terfez*, as it is called, much used still by Arabs and Syrians, was well known in Greek and Roman kitchens. Some, indeed, go so far as to think that the "mandrakes" which Reuben found, and brought to Leah, and which Rachel longed for, were *terfez*. However this may be, the truffle-trade was so important in Juvenal's time, that in one of his satires he says: "Don't trouble yourselves, you Libyans, to do any more

ploughing" (North Africa was then the granary of Rome); "we shan't complain if you send us truffles enough." But these were the *terfez*, a poor kind of thing, needing to be spiced up itself, instead of being used to give an indescribably delicate flavour to that which is cooked with it.

In the dark ages, cookery died out like many other classical arts. Men went back to the old Homeric roast and boiled. The tradition of truffles was only kept alive in the books of Avicenna and the other Arabian physicians. But with the revival of letters came the revival of cookery as a fine art. Men read about underground tubers in the Greek and Roman writers, from Theophrastus downwards; and so they began digging and cooking. There were rival popes in those days, and they were rivals in gastronomy, as well as in other things. Avignon and Rome vied with one another, not only in eloquent anathemas, but in elegant entertainments. Provence, too, the merry land of troubadours, was also a land of good cheer; nor was the court of Burgundy, enriched by its wealthy Flemish subjects, at all behind in the matter of dainty fare. In 1438, John the Good, then holding court in Brabant, paid six livres eight sols to Jehan Chaponnel, "*pour don quant nagaires il apporta à M. le duc des truffes de Bourgogne.*" A little later, in Pope Nicholas the Fifth's day, the cookery-book of Cælius, a Roman epicure of the time of Trojan, was found in some abbey library. This was loud in praise of truffles, "daughters of the earth, and the gods;" and no doubt the publication of it made them still more popular among the scholars of the Renaissance. But, though popes and Italian princes ate truffles; though Platina, and Ciccarelli, and Matthioli wrote about them; though Savonarola denounced them, urging men to beware of them for fear of God, if not for fear of colic and strangury, Southern France has always been their chosen home. The black truffle (the most highly flavoured) grows in Provence, in Poitou, in Southern Dauphiné, &c., more abundantly than elsewhere; it does, indeed, grow northward, but so sparingly that the whole produce of the Forest of Vincennes, for instance, used to be leased, about half a century ago, for between three and four pounds. Truffle-eating took a grand start in the days of the Regency—days of "*petits soupers*," those anticipations of our late dinners. Read about them in

Brillat-Savarin, the delightful historian and anecdotist of the culinary art; to read him is almost as good as eating them sautées (as they ought to be) in champagne—in which state they are as different from the dry things used in England to flavour poultry, as the wit which drops fresh from a brilliant talker's mouth, is from the stale jokes of a jest-book.

Pliny, that great compiler of old women's stories, calls the truffle a vitium terræ, something wrong with the ground, which forms the truffle by getting lumped into a hard mass; and he thinks to prove this by telling a story of some Roman general in Spain, who nearly had his front teeth pulled out, by getting them tightly fixed in a denarius, which was inside one of the truffles that he was eating. "How could the coin have got there," asks the sapient naturalist, "unless the thing was just a lump of hardened earth?" Plutarch looked on them as a sort of "thunder-bolt;" he says, the four elements go to the making of them—earth, air, water, and the electric fire. He may be so far right, that all the mushroom tribe are highly nitrogenous, and that in thunder weather a great deal of nitrate of ammonia is generated. More modern theories have been that the truffles are, like oak-apples and the "robin redbreast" of the dog-rose, the work of some gall-insect. We shall see that there is a truffle-fly; there is also a truffle-beetle; but neither of them has anything to do with the production of truffles. Others have thought that they were mere excrescences on the roots of the trees under which they are mostly found, and have, therefore, wounded the said roots as the Chinese are said to wound oysters to make them form pearls. Mushrooms, however, they are, and nothing else, i.e., vegetables of that large class which is called cryptogamous, because its members hide more or less completely their arrangements for reproducing their species. How ferns are really propagated has only just been discovered; and how truffles grow is still a mystery. Do they grow from spores—microscopic seeds thrown off from the tuber? Or have they, like the fungi which grow above ground, a mycelium—a network of soft threads forming a kind of root, and capable, under favourable conditions, of throwing up a fresh crop? This mycelium preserves the germs of life for a very long time; it is the vital part of those queer-looking cakes called mushroom-spawn; but truffle-spawn is one of those

inventions for which the world is still waiting. Rather more than a hundred years ago, Bradley, who thought that truffles might be profitably grown in England, planted them as one does potatoes, and the same plan was tried about the same time in Germany and North Italy. No doubt truffles did come where truffles were sown, but not in sufficient numbers, or with sufficient certainty, to make it worth while to cultivate them in that fashion.

There are truffles and truffles. Our native species is what the French call the summer truffle, light inside, and with far fainter smell than the black truffle. Naturalists sum up almost a score of different kinds, some of them merely flavourless lumps of leather; but the king of all is the black truffle—skin as dark as jet and covered with big warts; inside reddish or violet-black, marbled with light veins. Its smell is indescribable; there is something of lily-of-the-valley, something of decayed leaves, the slightest soupçon of musk, and a very great deal of truffle itself. Taste it in a Perigord-pie; or, better still, if you are wintering in the South of France, get a turkey stuffed with fresh truffles, and you will know more than pages of writing could teach you.

The truffle, then, is an underground fungus, remotely connected, therefore, with that strange freak of nature the earth-star (geaster hygrometricus), which is sometimes found in England, and which used to be sold at a seedsman's in Cornhill as "the Persian everlasting rose." I remember, when a school-boy, often flattening my nose against the pane, and reading how this marvellous rose, when put into water, would expand, and then shrivel up again when dry. I only lately found out that the said rose is nothing but this subterranean fungus, whose outer coating splits into a number of rays which, when damp, lie back like the petals of a flower, but, when dried, close tightly round the central lump. The object of this strange power of expansion and contraction is, that the fungus may work itself up to the surface. The truffle has no such power of coming to the front; if not found out and dug up, it ripens and rots away. The French generally use a pig in truffle-hunting. Such lean, long-legged swine! No wonder your French friends jokingly call them porcs de course (racing pigs) and cochons-levrier

(greyhound pigs). The ancients, using the *terfez* which grows in sandy soil, and is, therefore, easily discoverable, needed neither pigs nor dogs; but the pig was in use, both in France and Italy, quite early in the middle ages. An old writer says that people noticed that both the wild boars and also the pigs, that were turned in to eat the acorns, now and then went truffle-hunting on their own account; and so they got the idea of making their instinct useful. In the old times they used to put a strap round the pig's neck—as the Chinese do round the necks of their fishing-cormorants—to prevent him from swallowing the precious tuber; but now, the animals are so well trained that, when they have rooted out the truffle, they never touch it, but hold up their intelligent snouts for a bit of bread or a handful of acorns. It is the oddest sight in the world to see a Provençal peasant plodding about in an oak copse, a lean sow following him like a dog, and “making a point” wherever her nose tells her that what her master wants is underneath.

Dogs are used in some parts of France, chiefly in the Burgundy truffle-country, where they mostly hunt the summer-truffle. A well-trained dog costs four pounds. They train him by putting a truffle into a box full of holes, burying it, and making the dog dig it out, always rewarding him for his “find” with a tid-bit of some kind. The breed is Italian; and, during the truffle-mania, about the middle of the last century, it was introduced into England, Poland, and several parts of Germany. Many of the small German high-mightinesses and grand-serenities fancied truffle-hunting would be great fun, and paid heavily for the dogs, whom the dutiful chroniclers of their little greatness call, in their ponderous Latin, “*canes tuberario-venatici*.” Sussex shepherd's dogs have often been very sagacious truffle-hunters. But, where you have to get your bread by truffles, the pig seems the most useful ally. He can dig much better than the dog in hard, stony ground. The dog gets sooner tired; his feet grow sore; and he's sure to stray after game, if there be any. In Provence—the special home of the truffle—the only people who use dogs are the truffle-poachers, of whom there are a great many. I once heard of a man who used to take both pig and dog: the pig began the digging, and then the dog finished it; and, taking the truffle in his mouth, laid it at his master's feet. Human noses are seldom sharp enough to scent out the

buried treasure; though there is a story of a sickly boy who kept himself and his mother by marking truffles for his neighbours. Of course, some truffles grow so near the surface that they make a little crack in the ground, which catches the eye of the “hunter.” This is called in Provençal, hunting à l'escarto (by the mark). Another plan is carefully to poke down a thin iron rod where you fancy that the dying away of the grass may be caused by the truffle underneath having stolen all the nourishment. Your rod meets something hard; it may be a truffle, or it may be only a pebble. The last method is to watch where the truffle-fly settles or keeps fluttering about; you are pretty sure to find what you want, if you mark that spot and dig down.

The most interesting truffle market is at Apt, a little town in the South of Vaucluse, in the very centre of the artificial truffle-grounds of which I shall speak by-and-by. Here, from the middle of November to the end of March, every Saturday, there is a crowd, and a din of chattering tongues, and a swaying among the blue blouses, such as you could not match out of France; while, if it be wet, the “Place aux truffes” looks like a chopping sea of brown, and red, and green, and blue waves, as the mass of umbrellas tosses up and down. Such higgling, too, as if life and death depended on a centime! “Marchander” is certainly a French weakness; and there's plenty of it here to make us certain that, in spite of difference of language, the Provençal is a thorough Frenchman. The language is the tongue of the troubadours, which Mistral and Jasmin, the barber poet, brought, not many years ago, to new life. A sort of Spanish-Italian, it is so unlike ordinary French, that among Provençals a tolerably fluent foreigner may actually pass for a Frenchman. Some men who are proud of their French are always desperately annoyed when, after they have been showing off, comes the quiet remark, made, perhaps, by a bagman or small shop-keeper in a Norman town, “*Monsieur est étranger*.” If these touchy persons go to Provence they will be spared that annoyance at any rate.

Well, the higgling goes on. Rich peasant-proprietors bring out their stock, and battle manfully to keep up the price. Poor women, who have trudged in from leagues away with eight or ten little truffles tied up in the corner of a handkerchief, will sometimes stand all day, on the cold

stones, under the beating rain, rather than bate their price. Regraters go round, trying to pick up bargains, as towards afternoon the courage of the sellers begins to flag a little. The big purchases are generally made last; and then, carefully stored in a special fourgon, the precious wares are sent off to Carpentras. Peasants and dealers may be pretty well trusted to take care of themselves; it is the amateur buyer who suffers. "Put on your boots, my dear, and walk into the market and buy us a quarter kilo. or so of truffles," says Madame Bonnechose to her dutiful husband. "Aunt Grognon dines with us to-morrow, and I want to give her a surprise. She has no children, you know." So père Bonnechose tries his hand at marketing; and ten to one some insinuating little dealer (he shuns the wholesale folks, thinking they'll be dearer) palms off on him a worm-eaten lot, the holes neatly filled in with black earth, or sells him, as a bargain, a splendid big truffle, made up of several little things, stuck dexterously together with clay and bits of stick; or perhaps he buys a little bagful. The edge of the bag was turned down, and the truffles looked so black and fresh inside. So they were—those that he saw; but he didn't have the bag emptied out. The seller, a lively, pretty little woman, kept him in close talk till the money was paid—told him all about her farm and her turkeys and her husband's disagreeable relations. And so père Bonnechose gets "done," for the bottom of the bag is filled with "any kind of rubbish"—summer truffles, caïcou (smelling like rotten cheese), pebra (pepper-truffle, smelling of petroleum)—stained with gall-nuts or sulphate of iron. The truffle-bag is as deceptive as the old London "strawberry-pottle" used to be; and I should not like to stand in Bonnechose's shoes when Madame B. pours on him the vials of her wrath—tells him that it's all along of his flirting with the market-women; calls him a string of names, of which the mildest is "Grand imbécile," and winds up with a flood of tears, only to be stopped by the promise of a new bonnet for Easter. Sham truffles sometimes make their way to Paris, compacted of bits of bad potato, coloured and wrapped in a layer of truffle-earth, to give something like the right smell. The real thing is by no means appetising to look at. The man who first ate a truffle must have been almost as bold as he who first swallowed an oyster; but, despite

the unpromising appearance, there is something in the smell which appeals strongly to the instinct of the epicure.

There is plenty worth seeing at Carpentras—indeed, I do not know any part of Europe more full of interest than the whole of the old comtat (patrimony of the popes). Some of the interest is very painful. The village of Bedouin, now a great truffle-growing place, was cruelly destroyed in the old revolution, and one hundred and eighty of its inhabitants killed, because a "tree of liberty" was sawn through one night. Suchet, afterwards a famous general, commanded the destroying party. Carpentras has its old wall and gates pretty complete. It has a triumphal arch, not a tithe so good as that grand one at Orange—for it was long built into the bishop's palace, and served as his kitchen—but recording in its bas-reliefs, as the Orange arch does, some forgotten Roman victory over invading barbarians. When you go to Carpentras, mind you see the cathedral, part dating from the tenth century, and Constantine's bridle-bit, made out of a nail of the true cross; but be sure, too, to see the truffle-stores. Here what are not sent out fresh are preserved, either in tins, or in bottles for the sake of those who like to see what they buy. The quantity sent to Russia and America is enormous. All sorts of plans have been used for keeping them. You may have them in oil, in sugar, in brine, in vinegar. But eat them fresh if you have the chance; no preserved truffles, least of all the dried things one sometimes sees, give more than the faintest idea of their true flavour. You feel sure, as you eat a Perigord-pie, that the Romans could not have known the real truffle, or they would never have dreamt of spoiling it by dressing it with *garum*, *asafoetida*, and *rue*.

Truffles have made many a Provençal peasant rich, since Joseph Talon, of the village of les Talons, in Vaucluse, discovered some seventy years ago that if you want truffles you must sow acorns. He began life as a poor truffle-hunter (*rabassier*), and somehow got into the habit of dropping in an acorn wherever he took out a tuber. Finding the crop increase, he took to planting, and used to show with pride the little field in which his oldest oaks were growing. "*Ei d'aqui que sieon vengu au mounde*" ("That's how I got up in the world"), he would say. His son sends some twenty pounds a week to Apt market. What makes Talon's dis-

covery such a blessing, is that want of wood was rapidly turning the whole country into a desert. Since the revolution, everybody had cut down as much as he pleased, and planted as little. The consequence is, that hill-sides which used to have good grass, are now torn and seamed, and all the earth washed down from them by the floods of rain to which the forests used to act as a sponge. Vaucluse and its valley, and Petrarch's forest and garden, were become an oasis in the desert. The peasant hated trees, and shirked all edicts about replanting; all he cared for was to secure right of common for his crabros, the goats that give him milk and cheese. But now that he finds money is to be made by what trees bring with them—now that he sees a patch of poor gravelly soil bought for twenty pounds, bringing in after five years a yearly income of sixty pounds—he takes quite kindly to planting. The vine-disease, too, helped on the planting of truffle-grounds. Many an acre of stony hill-side, where the phylloxera had killed out the vines, is now covered with dwarf oaks, at whose roots truffle-hunting goes on every winter. If you go up Mont Ventoux, you will pass a deal of poor starved rye, which certainly is not worth, straw and all, three pounds an acre—and this has to be halved between the owner and his tenant; you then come to slopes on which nothing grows but wild thyme, and lavender, and “everlasting-flowers.” But somehow it will all carry dwarf oaks; and, in time, since the taste for truffles is not likely to die out, all these garrigues and galluches, as they are called, will be planted with profit to posterity, who will have the timber, as well as to the truffle-hunters. Moreover, the climate will be improved and the floods will be less frequent and destructive. No wonder the peasant-mind is going in for truffle-grounds, when the savoury tuber brings in yearly nearly four millions of francs to the little department of Vaucluse alone. Hence, though gourmandise is not a virtue, and truffle-selling does give rise to a deal of higgling and deception—though, moreover, truffle-poaching is the cause of no end of quarrels (peasants set up little watch-boxes in their fields, and go about on wet nights with dark lanterns)—we may consider the truffle a boon to the human race, and may reckon Joseph Talon among the benefactors of his species.

THE STORY OF THE ALBERT MEMORIAL.

FOURTEEN years ago the idea of a great national memorial to the late Prince Consort was launched at a public meeting, convened at the Mansion House, by the Lord Mayor (Mr. William Cubitt), to “consider the propriety of inviting contributions for the purpose of erecting a lasting memorial to H.R.H. the Prince Consort, and to adopt such measures,” &c. At that time the memory of the Prince, of whose virtues the world has since been made sufficiently cognisant, was yet fresh and green, and the great heart of the nation sympathised sincerely with the Queen in her sorrow. Loyal resolutions were passed and loyal persons opened their purses and subscribed, with all speed, some thirty-three thousand pounds. On the lord mayor fell the duty of communicating the result of the meeting to Her Majesty. In addition to the formal resolutions, appeared one which influenced materially the destiny of the memorial. It recommended that it “should be of a monumental and national character, and that its design and mode of execution be approved by Her most gracious Majesty the Queen.” In an admirable letter, dated Osborne, February 19, 1862, the Queen expressed her sense of the expression of her people's sympathy, and was “much touched by the feeling which led the promoters of the movement for erecting a national monument to the Prince to leave the nature of that monument to her decision.” There is little doubt that the Queen considered that the foundation of some institution, of advantage to the community at large, would show a just appreciation of the character of the deceased Prince; but that, as it would be very difficult to agree as to the nature of the institution which should bear his name, she gave her voice in favour of a monument directly personal to its object. The passage in which the Queen indicated the kind of monument she would prefer is striking enough: “After giving the subject her best consideration, Her Majesty has come to the conclusion that nothing would be more appropriate, provided it is on a scale of sufficient grandeur, than an obelisk, to be erected in Hyde-park on the site of the Great Exhibition of 1851, or on some spot immediately contiguous to it; nor would any proposal that can be made be more gratifying to the Queen personally, for she can never forget that the Prince himself

had highly approved of the idea of a memorial of this character being raised on the same spot, in remembrance of that exhibition. There would also be this advantage in a monument of this nature—that several of the first artists might take part in its execution, for there would be room at the base of the obelisk for various fine groups of statuary, each of which might be entrusted to a different artist." This was the original idea of the Queen, simple in its majesty, artistic in its surroundings. Unhappily, the execution of the design was handed over to trustees and committees—with the usual result. The first Committee of Advice was composed of the late Lord Derby, the late Lord Clarendon, the late Sir Charles Eastlake, and the then reigning Lord Mayor (the late Sir William Cubitt). The committee at once began to talk the matter over, and, by the gradual methods known to committees, accumulated a great deal of useless information. Instead of making up their minds as to the size of the obelisk required, and inviting tenders for the delivery of it in London, carriage paid, they went into possibilities and probabilities, and, in endeavouring to grasp the scientific side of the monolith, slipped from it altogether. They were unhappy in other respects. As if determined to thwart the plan suggested by the Queen, they hinted plainly, in their first report, that "considerable difficulties would have to be encountered in the ulterior arrangement of sculpture round the base, whether near or at some distance—bearing in mind the importance of giving the necessary prominence, in position and effect, to the statue of H.R.H. the Prince Consort." Now, in the Queen's letter to the lord mayor, there is no mention of a statue to the deceased Prince—a great obelisk, surrounded by "groups of statuary"—of course allegorical—being all that was proposed by her Majesty. An obelisk, with a statue of the Prince standing about somewhere near it, would, of course, have been ridiculous; but the said statue appears to have been evolved from the moral consciousness of the Committee of Advice. Having succeeded in getting into a preliminary muddle about the sculpture, the committee thought it well to defer the consideration of that section of the subject, and to confine their "attention exclusively, at first, to the question of the possibility of finding, in the United Kingdom, a monolith of sufficient dimensions, combining, with an approved colour, the important condition

of durability." The attention of the committee was now directed to granite; but as—so far as can be discovered—none of them, except Sir William Cubitt, knew anything about it, they sought the assistance of the Director-General of the Geological Survey, the late Sir Roderick Murchison, through whom they received the disheartening information that, wherever the granite was unobjectionable on the score of colour and structure, it was not capable of furnishing a block long enough to make an obelisk "on a scale of sufficient grandeur." With singular appropriateness, the committee extended their investigations to the island of Mull, where they discovered a mass of light red granite on the land belonging to the Duke of Argyll, who kindly offered them as much as they could carry away. The length of the excavated portion of the block exceeded a hundred and fifteen feet—a length considered sufficient for the intended obelisk. Fears, however, were entertained that the block was not sufficiently thick in the middle. Its weakness in the central region was not clearly made out; and the remark of an experienced contractor, that nothing could be affirmed, respecting the fitness of the stone till raised and turned out from its bed, effectually frightened the committee from recommending the necessary outlay. Scared away from Mull, they tried other places: Russian Finland, for instance; but were deterred from employing the handsome granite of that country, on account of some doubt as to its "durability" in the open air. The probable cost of the monolith also puzzled the Advice Committee, who got into another muddle by having too much artistic and scientific assistance. It was "the opinion of many that the obelisk would present an incomplete appearance unless the surface were enriched with incised sculpture, on the principle of execution adopted on Egyptian obelisks." Without, however, venturing to assign a limit to the entire cost, the committee were fully justified in expressing an opinion, that the whole of the sum already subscribed would be "absorbed by the obelisk alone." Without discussing the absorbent properties of a granite obelisk, it may be said that no more ridiculous report was ever signed by men of equal eminence in their particular walks of life—which were certainly not in the direction of monuments. Nothing would have marred the simple, chaste design suggested by the Queen more com-

pletely, than a monolith covered with imitation hieroglyphics; but "somebody," probably a joker, who did not like obelisks, had—not to put too fine a point upon it—"chaffed" the Advice Committee by proposing "incised sculpture." This report appeared in April, 1862; and with the International Exhibition, the Caractacus (by Foley) exhibited there, and that other Caractacus (by Kingston), who made an exhibition of the Marquis and Buckstone on Epsom Downs, divided the conversation of a very lively spring-time in London. Society was divided into monolithists, anti-monolithists, and those who did not quite know what a monolith was. Plenty of people came forward to demonstrate that nothing was easier than to find the granite required; but the Committee of Advice had advised, and unfortunately the Queen was induced to attach importance to their opinion. There is no doubt that Her Majesty abandoned the idea of an obelisk with very great reluctance; and it is curious to find that in the letter addressed to Sir Charles Eastlake, in reply to the report, occurs the first mention of a statue of the deceased Prince by the Queen herself. The matter was then left very much to the committee, who at once proceeded to add a new element of confusion. The Queen's choice of an obelisk, surrounded by sculptural decorations, had been generally acquiesced in, yet a strong opinion prevailed—mainly among doctrinaires and other troublesome people—that, "although it was desirable to see the Prince's memory perpetuated in some monumental form which should attract the attention and excite the curiosity of all beholders, some work of utility, such as His Royal Highness was known to have taken a deep interest in, might form part, at least, of the memorial, and thus might more strikingly bear witness to and reveal those qualities of mind which he so pre-eminently possessed." This opinion was not entirely artistic or sentimental; it was expected that the adoption of some such scheme as that indicated would "give a material impetus to the flow of the national subscriptions." Having now succeeded in reducing an originally grand and cosmic idea to utter chaos, the committee issued another report in June, 1862. In this remarkable document the obelisk disappears altogether, and a dim vision of a possible Albert Hall is shadowed forth. The public, it was said, desired to connect the intended monument with some institution

intimately associated with the Prince's name; and the committee, therefore, set themselves again to work, to consider what kind of institution Prince Albert would have desired to promote if he had been alive. This difficult question was solved by a vague recommendation to establish a "central institution for the promotion, in a largely useful sense, of science and art, as applied to productive industry." The ground between the Brompton-road and the Kensington-road was suggested as an appropriate site for the Central Hall of Union for Science and Art. What the Advice Committee imagined would be done in a Central Hall of Union will never be known, and it is thoroughly characteristic of men, born in the pre-scientific period, that they should think that any building could be made strong enough to hold the scientific world assembled in congress. Those born later know only too well that as the spite of women, or artists, or actors, or literary folk, musicians, or blood relations, is to the "odium theologicum," so is the latter bitter hatred to that feeling with which rival chemists, astronomers, or physiologists regard each other. To help in carrying out a double-barrelled memorial—half institute, half monument—a committee of architects was called in to advise the Advice Committee. Messrs. Tite, Smirk, G. Gilbert Scott, Penne-thorne, Donaldson, Hardwick, and M. D. Wyatt, produced a report on the joint scheme; and, very properly rejecting the idea of burying a national work in a quadrangle or in the central hall of any institution, selected the site for the memorial now occupied by it; recommending also the site of the present Albert Hall for the institution. Devoting themselves more particularly to the monument, the committee of architects rejected the idea of an obelisk other than as a monolith, regarding a built-up obelisk as showing an inferiority to the ancients. Here, undoubtedly, they touched what remains a sore place to this day. How was it that only fourteen years ago the resources of England, backed by all the modern appliances of engineering, steam, electricity, and the rest of it, proved unequal to the task of making an obelisk which should rival those of Egypt? The melancholy failure may be summed up in two words—committee and timidity. At the time when the monolith scheme was finally abandoned, between fifty and sixty thousand pounds had been subscribed;

but committees trembled at the cost of an obelisk, and blundered into an outlay of one hundred and twenty thousand on the structure just completed, whereof more presently. The committee of architects thought the objections which applied to an obelisk applied with equal force to a column, except in so far that a statue might be placed on the top of the latter. It was, however, urged that, in the latter case, the statue could not be well seen—perhaps no great disadvantage, as statues go. All things having been considered, the committee finally recommended a memorial composed of one or several groups of sculpture—of bronze, if placed in the open air; and it was also suggested that a better mixture of metals might be used than common bronze, and also that gilding might be partially employed. All these recommendations having been discussed by the Advice Committee, it was finally decided to build a monument and a memorial hall, and certain architects were invited to send in designs; but it was found that sixty thousand pounds would barely suffice to build a monument, and the central-hall project was abandoned. It may be well to remark in this place that the Albert Hall now existing—although built upon land granted for the purpose by the Commissioners of the Exhibition of 1851—is not the central hall referred to as part of the memorial project. It is not built from the designs prepared by Sir Gilbert Scott to harmonise with the monument, nor were the memorial funds applied to its construction. It was purely a joint-stock speculation, and, so far as it has gone, an unsuccessful one. Far from being able to divert any portion of the funds collected towards the erection of the "Central Hall of Science," the committee found themselves reduced to an abject condition by the tremendous estimate of Sir Gilbert—then Mr.—Scott for his design of a Gothic cross, somewhat after the fashion of the Eleanor crosses, which were also built in memory of a deceased consort. "The cost of Mr. Scott's memorial, after reducing the height from one hundred and eighty-five to one hundred and forty-eight feet," said the committee, "cannot, we fear, be estimated at much less than double the amount subscribed." Under these circumstances there was nothing to be done but to give up the hall, and appeal to Parliament for help to finish the monument. As a matter of fact,

the "catch-penny" idea of proposing a work of utility to attract subscriptions had turned out a complete failure. The calculation that a monument, to be erected in London, would be largely subscribed to by the provinces was based on the mistaken notion that, as Paris is France, so is London, England. This is an error of peculiarly Cockney character—something like that which assumed that, when the London daily newspapers were delivered by early trains in the provinces, the local journals would have nothing to do but to retire gracefully from business. Both expectations were disappointed. As provincial Englishmen stick to their Leeds Mercury or Manchester Guardian, so did they cling to their own localities when the Albert Memorial was proposed. To what end, it was asked, should a merchant of Liverpool, or Manchester, or a dweller at Oxford or Dublin, put his hand in his pocket to adorn London? Why not adorn his own county town, and testify the respect of the local population to the virtues of the dead? Coupled with this very reasonable feeling was another of a somewhat different sort. A memorial to anybody is a fine opportunity for forming a committee, and is always seized hold of by fussy, but not otherwise immoral, persons, as a pretext for pushing themselves forward in the world, at the cost of a small outlay. Our active and public-spirited townsmen Mr. Todger and Major Bodger both make the most of a memorial fund. One rubs shoulders with the mayor, and the other gets on speaking terms with the great county people who ignore volunteer rank. Their first effort is to catch a lord for a chairman of committee, and, having once secured him, they take every means short of cart-ropes to drag him to the meetings, called frequently to the end that the said Todger and Bodger may so fix their outward and visible husks upon the retina of the unfortunate peer, that he may be unable to cut them when the business is over. Thus Todger and Bodger are made happy. For the rest of their natural lives they bow to Lord Tadpole, and walk with a firmer step as that good-natured nobleman acknowledges their existence. Moreover, their names appear repeatedly in the local papers, and, on the day when the statue is unveiled, they are, perhaps, allowed to make a speech. All this being understood, it becomes clear why the local Albert Memorials took so much of the "gilt off" the London

"ginger-bread" (there, the word is out). Moreover, there was distress in Lancashire—the cotton famine and a great subscription for the sufferers by the accident at the Hartley Colliery. That very industrious and useful body, the Society of Arts, did all that could be done in raising subscriptions among the humbler classes, and contrived to get together twelve thousand pounds; but this was the last popular contribution, and Parliament was appealed to. In the Session of 1863, Lord Palmerston brought the matter before the House of Commons, and a vote of fifty thousand pounds, as an unconditional grant to the Queen, for the purposes of the memorial, was unanimously agreed to. The necessary funds having at last been obtained, more committees were appointed. Lord Torrington, Sir Charles Phipps, Sir Alexander Spearman, and Sir William Cubitt, became trustees; and General Grey, Sir Charles Phipps, Sir Alexander Spearman, Sir Charles Eastlake, Sir Thomas Biddulph, became the "Prince Consort National Memorial Execution Committee." It is strange, but not less true, that the Albert Memorial has proved fatal to a large proportion of those engaged in furthering its completion. The members of the original Advice Committee are all dead. Of the trustees and executive committee, Sir Charles Eastlake died, and was succeeded by Mr. Layard, who, on his appointment to Spain, was replaced by Mr. C. T. Newton. Sir Charles Phipps and General Grey also died. Of the sculptors, Baron Marochetti, Mr. Foley, and Mr. Philip are all three dead.

The model of the memorial, being prepared from Sir Gilbert Scott's designs and approved, Mr. Kelk came forward and offered to construct the edifice at cost price—estimating it at eighty-five thousand five hundred and eight pounds, leaving thirty-five thousand pounds for the statuary, &c.

Despite the death of artists and sculptors, the memorial grew slowly into shape, until the Eleanor cross was exposed to public view. Then the storm of adverse criticism burst forth, and the numerous objections originally urged against the model were reiterated with tenfold severity. It was pointed out that the idea of the structure was borrowed from a shrine—a piece of goldsmith's work, always erected in an enclosed and covered space, and by no means exposed to the full force of the elements. Of the superbly-jewelled shrines

made by mediæval goldsmiths, there are many specimens extant—mostly robbed of their jewels, by-the-way. From these the design of Sir Gilbert Scott's Eleanor cross was confessedly taken, and the skill of the artist was directed, or misdirected, to the task of creating an overgrown shrine in the open air—a blunder of which neither mediæval architect nor goldsmith would have been guilty. The spire of the edifice was adorned with numerous statues of bronze, and bronze gilt, conveniently placed where they could not be seen, or seen only as mere additions to the general effect of tawdriness. It was predicted that the glitter of the gilding would soon wear off, and that then the effect would be as of pinchbeck or of mosaic gold—a valuable compound, made in the proportion of a single golden sovereign to a copper coal-scuttle. These prophecies have been realised to the letter. The gold is grimy and black, the costly spire, with its sculptured adornments all subordinated to what is facetiously called "decorative art," because it does not decorate, produces an effect utterly incommensurate with its enormous cost. The one redeeming point of the whole design is that part of it which is not "decorative," and therefore a charming incongruity. The marble sculpture round the podium, and the superb groups at the angles of the pedestal, redeem the memorial from the stigma of absolute failure. Mr. John Bell's "America," and the late Mr. Foley's noble "Asia," are works worthy of any country or of any sculptor of modern days, and, it must be added, are in a material selected with a judiciousness exhibited in no other portion of the memorial monument. The Sicilian marble—so called because it does not come from Sicily, but from Carrara, where it is called "campanella," from its ringing like a bell when struck with a hammer—is a close-grained marble; grey at first, but becoming white on exposure to the air; and fairly tested by its employment in great open-air works, such as the Cathedral of Pisa. The great groups are eminently successful, and a fair, but smaller, meed of praise may be awarded to the groups at the angles and the reliefs of the podium; but here, unfortunately, praise stops short, for nothing but condemnation can be expressed of the central figure of all—the statue of the late Prince Consort recently unveiled. Misfortune clung from the first to this unhappy statue. For some inscrutable reason the late Baron Marochetti

was selected as the sculptor. His first model provoked nothing but laughter. It represented the Prince, seated and attired in the costume of a field-marshal, jack-boots and all—a curious costume for a man whose useful life was spent in promoting the arts of peace!—to be set up, too, on the site of the Exhibition of 1851. The jack-boots settled its doom. When looked at from below, the figure was “all” jack-boots, and was condemned accordingly. Poor Baron Marochetti never got over it. He began a second model, it is true; but death stepped in and stopped his work for ever, and his second model was consigned to the limbo of inchoate ideas. The work was then entrusted to the late Mr. Foley, who produced, perhaps, as good a model of a sitting figure as could be designed. It gave perfect satisfaction, and, but for the absurd addition of a gilded surface, would have done much to rescue the memorial from obloquy and derision. But “decorative art” demanded that the bronze statue should be gilt; and the result is the monstrosity now on view in Hyde-park. Description fails to convey any idea of the frightful reality. There is an old Greek story of a banquet from which the sun turned away his eye; but the pale luminary which visits London appears to take delight in dwelling on the gilded effigy—in playing round it, and in revealing its barbaresque ugliness. With the gold scraped off, the statue would be—so far as a sitting statue can be—well enough; but the glittering surface sets all artistic effect at naught. And this is the outcome of a hundred and twenty thousand pounds: a ginger-bread spire of faded gold, and a glaring colossus, the laughter of foreigners and the wonder of nursemaids!

DAFFODILS.

I STAND, AS ONCE I stood of old,
Upon a meadow's green and gold,
This sunny April day;
The little daisies kiss my feet,
The blackbird's call is clear and sweet,
And care is far away.

A solemn peace lies on my heart,
So lately wont to throb and smart,
And chafe at human ills;
I lift my face to feel the breeze,
That wanders through the budding trees,
And shakes the daffodils.

How sweet they show to weary eyes,
These hardy yellow blooms that rise
On slender fluted stalks!
They need no culture, thought, or care,
But spring with spring-time, free and fair,
O'er all our common walks.

On meadow green, by leafy hedge,
In woodland shade, and rushy sedge,
By little lowly rills;
While yet the north wind blows his blast,
Before the storm and sleet-are past,
Laugh out the daffodils.

They rise this year from last year's grave,
And all their golden tassels wave
As blithely now as then.
So I, who love their beauty so,
Rise up this year from last year's woe,
And gather flowers again.

What though from many a dream I part,
I feel the spring-time in my heart,
My tired sorrows cease.
I whisper to the yellow flowers,
“This year shall bring me summer hours,
And deeper, surer peace.”

What though the feet that walked with mine
Through last year's days of shade and shine,
Among my native hills,
Have wandered from my side, and I
Stand lonely under God's blue sky,
Among the daffodils;

What though the hand which held my own
In love's own clasp, while love's own tone
Grew tender unto pain,
Has left my poor hand thin and cold;
I bring the trusting heart of old
To these bright flowers again.

MY PREDECESSOR.

A CERTAIN love of contrast and comparison is, I think, inherent in people of commonplace minds. They cannot admire or condemn anything on its own merits or demerits; they must consider it in relation to something else; judge it, not for what it is, but for what it isn't. Nor do they confine to inanimate objects this method of arriving at an opinion; they pronounce upon human beings after a like manner.

At many periods of my life I have suffered by collation with others, the invariable result being grave disparagement of me, and prompt proclamation of my inferiority. During that distressing time when my passion for Julia P. was at its height, I had to receive the mortifying information that she could not view me as comparable with certain earlier of her suitors; and thereupon was I dismissed from her presence for ever. When, at a much later date, I became the husband of my late lamented Isabella, it was my doom to listen to an almost daily narration of the surpassing worth, the unparalleled excellence, of her first partner; for, perhaps unwisely—indeed, I may now say for certain, most unwisely—I had besought poor Isabella to bestow her hand upon me, albeit she was still wearing crape for, and lamenting, her previous consort. It was not to the purpose that he had been a

toper, a gambler, a wretch who abused her, brought her to beggary, beat her, and generally involved her in exceeding misery. For the sake of underrating me she overvalued him; to prove me a sinner she reckoned him a saint; and professed to lament as a loss what she might fairly have rejoiced in as an absolute gain. And so, when I became the occupant of apartments in the house of Mrs. Butterworth, No. 98, Great Decorum Street, in the neighbourhood of the Foundling Hospital, I was subjected to disagreeable allusions to my predecessor, with a view to a steady depreciation of myself. The former lodger was for ever being held up to me as an exemplar; all lodgers, it was urged, should be as that lodger—they were to be ruled by him; his method of life, his modes of thought, speech, and action were to be theirs. It cannot be matter for surprise, that in time I grew to loathe my predecessor.

Why did I not forthwith quit my lodgings? Well, a proceeding of that kind is really less easy than it seems to be. The rooms were let furnished, I admit; and therefore, beyond the packing up of a portmanteau or so, I had little to do in the way of preparing for departure. Still, I find myself apt to tarry in a place, until something of a habit of tarrying there is acquired. Ability to move promptly, or upon light provocation, depends very much upon constitution of mind. Now, I am not of a very locomotive nature; a change of abode is always, to me, a most inconvenient measure. I hold it, as a rule, far better (to quote tritely) to bear the ills we have, than to fly to others that we know not of. There is always a possibility that no good consequence may follow energy of action; and there is unquestionably a philosophical consolation to be derived from passivity, patience, and endurance. So I remained an inmate of Mrs. Butterworth's house. After all, let me resort to whatever lodgings I might, I felt persuaded of my liability to a predecessor, with whose conduct mine might be unfavourably contrasted. Not let it be understood, that I liked my lodgings, or, for that matter, my landlady, Mrs. Butterworth.

Landladies, I have learnt from experience, are of two kinds—the oily and the vinegary. Mrs. Butterworth was an oily landlady.

She let lodgings, and in such wise obtained her subsistence. She took pride

in her respectability, perhaps, to an unreasonable extent; but she was not otherwise pretentious. Certainly she was not above her business, if that phrase may be understood as expressive of her willingness to profit by her lodgers in every possible way. She was content to live in the kitchen, and she undertook various domestic duties of a menial kind; still there served under her, more or less docilely and regularly, an inferior functionary, commonly known as "the gurl." She objected to "run on errands," as she frankly admitted; but this arose, however, from no unwillingness to oblige, but, as she averred, was really attributable to a certain difficulty of breathing that much beset her. She was a weighty woman, of somewhat unwieldy proportions; of an asthmatic tendency, with a husky voice; and what might be called a panting or palpitating manner. Her large fleshy face wore usually an unwholesome flush, and a smile of an unctuous and rather mindless description. Her eyes lacked lustre, save of a veiled or ground-glass kind, and rolled to and fro in rather a random fashion, like vessels insecurely moored in troubled waters. She appeared invariably in a crumpled black cap of some gauzy material, which permitted glimpses beneath of tangled grey hair, intertwined here and there with fragments of greasy brown paper; and her large form was loosely cased in a print dress, of a lilac hue, and an all-over pattern—although on festive occasions she was capable of a creased and smeared black satin dress, with a soiled collar of doubtful lace, a breast-knot of faded ribbons, and a sham cameo brooch of vast dimensions.

Mrs. Butterworth freely avowed that her apartments were not furnished with an eye to display or fashion; and this was true enough—an air of shabbiness attended them. Limp, worn dinginess characterised the hangings and draperies; the carpets were threadbare; the chairs and tables were loose-jointed and infirm, creaking and groaning when used, as though crying aloud for glue to repair their imperfections. The ceiling was cracked into the sort of pattern children chalk upon the pavement when they would play "hop-scotch," and was clouded over with the smoke and dust of many years. But while disclaiming all pretence to fashion or splendour, Mrs. Butterworth much insisted upon the comfort of her rooms. Possibly, to her thinking, comfort

signified neglect and dirt. "Gentlemen likes to be comfortable," she would observe, "and to do as they've a mind to. Well, they can do it here, and welcome. There's parties as objects to tobacco smoke; that ain't my way. There's parties as finds fault with muddy boots on the carpets or the sofas; but I never did hold with such. There's nothing here that can well be spiled"—her statement was not to be gainsaid—"and I haven't let lodgings all these years without finding out that gentlemen will be gentlemen, and likes to have their own ways, and their little fancies and comforts dooly considered. If a gentleman can't make himself comfortable in these rooms, what I say is, the fault's his own."

Without doubt, Mrs. Butterworth had been enabled, thanks to her experience of many years as a letter of lodgings, to appreciate that disregard for the niceties and formalities of domestic life—that indifference as to order and tidiness—so markedly distinguishing the male mind. A man does disapprove of that huddling away of the useful and common objects and appendages of every-day life, which women so delight in for the sake of a show and a seeming of neatness and symmetry. But Mrs. Butterworth, perhaps, credited her lodgers with a love of dust and uncleanness really foreign to their natures. However, it was not so much on this head that I found myself differing with my landlady. What I objected to was her strange but invincible preference for the person who had preceded me as tenant of her furnished apartments.

She constantly spoke of him as "the last gentleman," as though with him had ended the whole stock of gentility in this country. And further, she mentioned him as "a perfect gentleman," as though all other specimens of the class that had come under her notice were deficient in some one or other important respect. She was greatly occupied with his sayings and doings; she described fully his cheerful and obliging nature, his attractive ways, his wit and humour, his noble appearance, his elegance of dress, and generally the grace and charm of his method of life. I soon made up my mind that he was odious in no common degree.

He was a bagman, I decided, although upon insufficient grounds possibly, for upon this point Mrs. Butterworth did not supply very precise information. Her statements, indeed, were always inclined to be inexact.

At one time she certainly attributed to him professional connection with the newspaper-press; but the only evidence she could adduce in support of this view concerned the uncertain hours he kept, and the readiness with which he could procure orders for the theatres. He was frequently absent for weeks together; he lived "like a fighting-cock"—so Mrs. Butterworth asserted, without, perhaps, any distinct knowledge of the diet of that fowl; and he had a way of obtaining articles of all kinds at trade price, or upon even cheaper terms. Altogether there were some fair grounds for believing him a bagman. Mrs. Butterworth said simply that he "travelled," but whether in silk, wine, furs, or hardware, she could not be sure. She was, perhaps, without any definite idea of the signification of "travelling" considered technically.

She was an inaccurate woman, with what might be called a flabby system of speech. She was never quite clear even as to the surname of my predecessor. Paddymore, Pabbledore, Passymore, Passlebore, Poddlenore: she referred to him by all these appellations and by various others, but distantly connected with these, such as Popplequick, Dubbleby, Damblewick, Bassiter, Mushaway, &c. I decided that his name was of two syllables—Pasmore, probably. She was prone, I had noticed, to a redundant syllable—as though words could be improved by what in music is termed an appoggiatura. Thus, with her, Westminster became Westminister; a villain was a villian; Henry was Henery; breakfasts were breakfastes, and even sometimes breakfastesses; several was tortured into severall; and so on. Whenever I mentioned the name of Pasmore, she always understood that I was alluding to my predecessor.

He ate and drank of the best. He was of liberal disposition; was even profusely inclined. He was jocose; of a genial nature; addicted to conundrums and comic songs. He smoked admirable cigars, and a meerschaum pipe of magnificent design. He dressed after a costly fashion, enjoying fame on the score of his glossy hats, his light tight gloves, his lacquered boots, and a large overcoat of sable or seal skin, or some such costly fur, reputed to be of enormous value. I felt, as I learned these particulars, how much I suffered by comparison with my predecessor. I have never laid much stress upon my outer

man; so that I have clothes enough to cover me, and keep me warm sufficiently, I am indifferent as to their texture, hue, or pattern. When Mrs. Butterworth spoke of Mr. Pasmore's hats, it seemed to me that she glanced disrespectfully at my own rather battered head-gear. And it was the same with other things. If I ordered eggs for breakfast, I was forthwith reminded that in addition to eggs, my predecessor was in the habit of enjoying bacon and kidneys, chops and lamb's fry, or some such delicacies. If I ventured to examine Mrs. Butterworth's book, I was instantly reminded that "the last gentleman" had invariably satisfied her demand without any auditing of her accounts—not to mention his being "that free" with his money, as to hand over any loose change there might be to "the gurl." I had a decent silk umbrella; but his umbrella was decked with golden bands, and had an agate knob. My stick was of useful blackthorn; he carried a grandly-tasselled cane, much ornamented with precious metal. His very whiskers were luxuriant; mine, I admit, are of inferior, even of scrub-like growth. I own frankly to being plain of person; but I had never felt this of so serious a disadvantage until circumstances had forced me into comparison with this creature Pasmore, whose peculiar comeliness was strongly insisted upon by Mrs. Butterworth. Is it not surprising altogether that I did not love my predecessor?

I sought, naturally, to find joints in his harness—weak places in his character, and constitution, and habits—upon which I might dwell, and so find comfort. I persuaded myself that he was grossly vulgar, that he over-dressed and over-ate himself, that he was ill-bred, illiterate, coarse—a very low person in fact, with a certain gross cajoling manner, and a fondness for cheap display, likely to impress exceedingly such a woman as Mrs. Butterworth. But her opinion of him, I soon found, was not to be shaken; I could not persuade her even to hint a word to his prejudice; nor could I really discover any special flaw in her account of him. One fact was beyond question. He had paid all claims upon him—including, of course, Mrs. Butterworth's—with exemplary and enviable punctuality.

I could only hope to live him down, as it were. As time passed, Mrs. Butterworth's memory might decline—the charm and graces of my predecessor might present themselves to her less vividly. There

was even a possibility that my own merits—upon which, as a modest man, I am disposed to be dumb—might eventually tell upon Mrs. Butterworth. The lodger coming after me might have fables narrated of me, comparisons instituted to his inconvenience, just as it was now my turn to listen to these too-flattering accounts of my predecessor. If I am asked what did it really matter that Mrs. Butterworth thought unworthily of me, in regard to Mr. Pasmore, I can only say that it did not, of course, really matter; still the things that do not matter have, somehow, a way of materially affecting the comforts and enjoyments of human life.

People who live alone seem almost driven to look from their windows, in satisfaction of that longing for companionship which distinguishes man. It is something to see one's fellow-creatures moving to and fro, even if one is never to know more of them, or of the objects of their proceedings. I am a constant looker out of windows; a watcher of the passers-by; an observer of my neighbours. Great Decorum-street is but a dull thoroughfare; not particularly frequented; tenanted by very commonplace people—poorly genteel, or genteelly poor. Still, I was very frequently at my window; sometimes with nothing better to contemplate than the amazing congregation of blacks on the window-sill.

It was some time before I was conscious that I in my turn was an object of contemplation and interest. Looking down from above, a second-floor window, I found that I was looked at from below, very pertinaciously. A man's eyes were fixed upon me—as the ghost in Hamlet fixed his eyes upon Horatio—most constantly. The man was a policeman.

He watched me, as I judged, for some days, being relieved at intervals by other policemen. It was certainly curious. The thing set me wondering somewhat, but did not otherwise vex or move me. Happily mine is a mind conscious of its own integrity. I felt assured that the constable was not really watching me, although he might seem to be so. His eye—representing that more important organ, the eye of the law—could not but be fixed in fact upon some other object.

I had finished breakfast. I had put aside the newspaper, with that feeling common to all readers of newspapers laying down their journals, that really there was very little news abroad to justify so much writing and printing, when Mrs. Butter-

worth entered my sitting-room with an unaccountable suddenness and impetuosity.

She informed me that I was wanted.

"Wanted?" I repeated, with vague surprise, and interrogatively.

"Yes, please," she answered; "by a policeman." And there was, I perceived, a radiance upon her face betokening joy at my obvious discomfort, and at the justification thus afforded for her systematic depreciation of me. I read her expression of countenance; I was a very inferior person; I had been guilty of unworthy conduct; I had incurred the rebuke of the law, in the shape of a constable. It was just what she had expected of me, and been accordingly prepared for all along.

"There must be some mistake."

"Oh, I daresay. There often is mistakes." This was said with an air of exceeding incredulity, not unmixed with irony.

"Why, what do you mean?" I asked, with some indignation. "What do you think has happened?"

"Oh, it isn't for me to say;" as she spoke her face wore a sort of greasy leer that I found very objectionable. "But I suppose you've been forgetting yourself somehow. Gentlemen will be gentlemen, you know, and they gets forgetting themselves nows and thens. You've been taking a glass, perhaps. I've known a many gentlemen as that's happen to; and——"

"Show the policeman up," I said, sharply. He entered forthwith. He had been standing immediately outside the door of the room, as it seemed.

He bowed rather stiffly, and coughed behind his hand, by way of apology, as I understood it; but I could not fail to notice that there was something of distrust about his manner. He then glanced significantly from me to Mrs. Butterworth.

"Take a chair, policeman," I said in a stately way. "You need not remain, Mrs. Butterworth."

"I'd as lief stand," he said, with a second apologetic cough. Mrs. Butterworth withdrew, but with manifest reluctance. She took up her position, I feel persuaded, just outside the door, and possibly her ear was placed in the immediate neighbourhood of the key-hole. I do not think, however, that she could have overheard much, for my conversation with the constable was carried on in a very subdued tone.

"It ain't a pleasant business——" the policeman began.

"It rarely is a pleasant business that a policeman—on duty—has anything to do with," I said. But I soon found that my interlocutor was of a grave and stolid nature, disinclined for any remarks of a light character.

"It's only a case of suspicion—as yet; I may say that much," and he coughed again. "But there's something wrong been going on here for a long time past."

"Here? In this house? You don't mean that?"

"Well, sir, that is about what I mean. Of course I've a duty to perform, and I must go through with it. You can well understand that, sir, I daresay. I've come here——"

"From information you've received?"

"That's just it, sir. But I've full authority. I've a search-warrant with me if you care to see it."

"You've a warrant?"

"Yes. Don't be alarmed, sir, I ain't arresting you, you know. There's no case against you, as I understand—not at present, at any rate. But I'm bound to search these here premises."

"Search them? But what for?"

He did not reply immediately; but, producing a black leather pocket-book, he drew from it a photograph, which he handed to me.

"Do you happen to know that party?"

The portrait resembled no one I knew, or had ever known. I said as much.

"You're sure?"

"Quite sure."

He eyed me very suspiciously, and seemed dissatisfied with my reply. He resumed possession of the photograph; and then, with a very blunt pencil, which he found it necessary to moisten with his tongue, he made a brief entry in his pocket-book.

"How long have you lived here?"

I told him.

"Not longer than that? You're sure? No doubt that might make a difference," he added, meditatively; and then he glanced round the room.

"Is that desk yours? and that despatch-box? and the portmanteau likewise? You occupy the bedroom at the back?"

I replied in the affirmative to all these inquiries.

"And you're the only lodger on this floor?"

"The only lodger."

"If you'll excuse me, sir, I must put my search-warrant in force."

"You're quite welcome. Here are my keys; I have nothing to conceal. You are perfectly free to make whatever examination you think necessary. I can only answer, of course, for the portion of the premises in my own occupation. But, I have no doubt, Mrs. Butterworth will offer no hindrance; will even lend you every assistance in searching the other parts of the premises."

"Mrs. Butterworth? The landlady, I suppose? Well, I dunno so much about her."

The policeman shook his head doubtfully, and coughed once more—clearly an artificial cough—behind his hand. He again looked round the room.

"You don't happen to know the party as lived here before you?"

"His name, I believe, was Pasmore, or something like it. I did not know him. I never saw him, that I am aware of."

"Oh, his name was Pasmore, was it, or something like it? But you don't know him? There's no mistake about that?"

"No mistake whatever. But Mrs. Butterworth will tell you anything you want to know about Mr. Pasmore. She's told me a good deal about him."

"Has she? Well, I must see about Mrs. Butterworth. I should, perhaps, have mentioned to you before—in the way of caution—that anything you say to me may possibly be used against you at some future time."

"You mean——?"

"Well, to be plain with you, sir, you're under suspicion. This is a case of smashing. We've been on to it for a good time past, without being able to drop on to anything very particular. I don't mean to say that what there is against you amounts to a case; and, to be frank with you, I don't believe that you've even been really in the swim at all. You'll excuse me for saying that I take you to be far too soft a gentleman for the business. But you know, or, maybe, you don't know, that you passed two bad half-crowns last week, and a doubtful shilling or so the week before?"

"I did?"

"No question at all about it. The money's been traced."

I confess I was much amazed.

"Why," I said, after a moment's reflection, "all the change I've received during the last two weeks has been handed me by Mrs.——"

"Mrs. Butterworth—just so," and he grinned in rather a ghastly way.

"Now," he continued, "I'll trouble you for the key of that corner cupboard."

"I have not got it."

"I thought not. I think I see how the land lies."

"You are welcome to examine all I possess——"

"Except this cupboard. But it's just this cupboard I want to examine—and mean to. The key, if you please!"

"I haven't got it," I repeated.

"Then I must prize the lock."

"Possibly Mrs. Butterworth has the key." I rang the bell.

Mrs. Butterworth appeared almost immediately. She could not have been far from the door. She was panting as usual, but she was pale, which was not usual with her.

"There's nothing in that cupboard, young man," she said to the policeman.

"Nothing? Then there'll be no harm in my searching it."

"There's only a few things belonging to the last gentleman."

"Mr. Pasmore?"

"Mr. Battledore." For so, as I gathered, she now pronounced the name.

"He left you in a hurry, I think?"

"Well, he did, poor gentleman. His mother was dying."

"I must have the key."

"It's not in my possession."

"You're sure? Be careful now. And you haven't an idea what's inside the cupboard?"

"I haven't. The last gentleman, leaving in a hurry, asked for permission to stow away in that cupboard a few things he couldn't well take with him. Of course I gave him leave—and the key—which he put in his pocket. I was very happy to oblige him; for of all the perfect gentlemen——" she indulged in a very flattering and high-flown account of my predecessor.

"Is that at all like him?" demanded the policeman, exhibiting his photograph.

"The very himage of his 'andsome face."

Now the portrait did not represent at all a handsome man, but rather a plain one—indeed, a very plain one. A common-looking creature with abundant greasy curls and whiskers; a swollen nose of the Hebrew pattern; a smirking, sinister-looking mouth; and glaring eyes that squinted—I am almost sure they squinted. Such was my predecessor! He wore a velvet coat and a plaid waistcoat, over which streamed the ends of a silk handkerchief,

drawn through a jewelled ring. He was exposing to view an ill-shaped, thick-fingered hand, in which he held a stump of a cigar—a vile one, I am persuaded, by its aspect in the photograph.

"I should have recognised him anywhere," said Mrs. Butterworth.

"You've seen him lately?"

"Not so long since. He called one day—a fortnight ago, I think it were—quite miscellaneous like, and was perlit as perlit. He give me change for a sovereign. I was buying a lettuce at the street door, and hadn't a sixpence in silver, I remember. The sight of him did me good, for of all the nice gentlemen——" She went on with her customary effusiveness.

"I think we're on to him nicely now," said the policeman. "He's known to us as Spicy Benjamin; a dodger if there ever was one. For this cupboard——"

He opened it with an instrument he had brought with him.

"The charge is smashing—or coining, if you like to call it so—and here we have full particulars. This was how your bad half-crowns was managed, sir."

The cupboard contained all things necessary to the fabrication of base money: various tools, moulds in plaster of Paris, dies, a lump of Britannia metal, means of counterfeiting the milling round the edges of coins, &c.—the complete outfit, I may call it, of a coiner.

"There's no fear we shan't nobble Spicy Benjamin now," said the policeman. "But I own we've been a while upon his track—and we've been after various wrong persons. But that's our way, that is—and it don't so much matter so as we hit on the right trail at last. We don't always; but I think we can't fail in this case. As nice and gin-teel a bit of smashing as I think I've often met with."

I have reason to believe that the person known to the police as Spicy Benjamin, and to me as My Predecessor, was eventually brought to justice and suffered, if not very severely, for his offences against the law.

And now, I thought, I shall no longer incur disparagement at the hands of Mrs. Butterworth. In comparison with a convicted felon, surely I shall appear to some advantage.

But no. Mrs. Butterworth was dazed at first—frightened, I think, lest she should be implicated in her favourite lodger's criminality; but, indeed, she was, I believe,

wholly innocent, and for a while she was silent on the subject. But gradually I found her absurd first impressions reasserting themselves; she was drifting back to her old high estimate of my predecessor; clearly she thought no better of me than formerly. In time she had actually persuaded herself that his misdeeds were but peccadilloes, of a light, and elegant, and genial nature, such as any gentleman might happen to commit without being very deserving of censure. And she took to underrating me because I was not a coiner!

"After all," she said, "there's a many as would like to do what he did, poor dear, only they durstn't. Whatever he was, he was never a sneak; and he'd a nice way with him as would win the heart of a broomstick. What did it matter if his half-crowns was bad ones? He was very liberal with 'em. He'd give 'em away—I've seen him, times and times—as though they was dross. That's more than you can say of everybody."

It ended in my giving up my apartments in Great Decorum-street. I have seen nothing since either of my landlady, Mrs. Butterworth, or of my predecessor, Mr. Pasmore, otherwise known as Spicy Benjamin.

GRIFFITH'S DOUBLE.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOBY,
AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," &c. &c.

BOOK III. WIDOW AND MOTHER. CHAPTER VI.
A VOYAGE AND A HAVEN.

WITH her restoration to health, and her absorbing delight in her child, Mary Pemberton began to take a more cheerful view of the future and its possibilities, and to believe that the breach of affection and confidence between herself and Ida might be healed. A good deal of the girl's perverseness had disappeared; she avoided her step-mother's society less markedly than she had previously done; she was less ostentatiously indifferent about the plans and preparations for their voyage to England. Not a word was said between them on the subject of Geoffrey Dale; and if Ida's conscience reproved her, reminding her that Mrs. Pemberton regarded her as under a promise to tell her the precise fact which she was hiding from her, she silenced its monitions by the argument that it was but fair to let Mr. Dale have an opportunity of removing her step-mother's prejudice against him, which

could only be secured for him without Mrs. Pemberton's previous knowledge.

"It will all come right," Ida persuaded herself, with the hopefulness natural to her years. "I daresay he will not keep up his dislike to her. Whatever he knows about her may not be so bad after all. I shouldn't wonder if they were good friends before we got to England."

That getting to England, which had been vague before, began to assume a pleasanter aspect to Ida's fancy. The voyage would be so different since "he" was to share it; and the arrival among strangers so much less formidable since "he" would be in England, and within reach. Even though it had brought her trouble and worry, and might, if Mrs. Pemberton should persist in making a grievance of it, bring her more, Ida, who was not aware that she was in love with the man, felt that the possession of a "great friend" of her own was an advantage highly to be prized in beginning all over again in a strange place.

The stir of preparation began at Mount Kiera Lodge, so soon as Mrs. Pemberton was well enough to superintend and direct the proceedings. Ida was not distinguished for her usefulness on the occasion; she mainly employed herself in making farewell visits to all the places of her predilection, which were numerous, and to the people whom she knew. She was not inconsolable, though she was sorry, and she declared her intention of coming back, "some time or other," to the old home. She had been used to hear her father speak of England as "home," after twenty years' absence; so should she in the future speak of the colony. Dick was going with her, as had been arranged when Ida's father had settled everything—all that she knew of, and much that she did not know of—for his "spoiled child;" and many a talk she and Dick had over the matter, conducted after their respective kind. Ida proposed to herself a test which she should apply to her relatives at the Antipodes. Any among them who should appreciate Dick, and consider that it was quite the proper thing for her to have brought him to England, should find favour in her sight, and be accounted wise and pleasant folk; but any who should say that it was absurd, and that there were plenty of horses to be had in England, just as good as Dick, she—well, she should know what to think of such people, and how to regulate her relations

with them! And Ida regarded herself as rather sharp and knowing in the ways of human nature, when it occurred to her to take this latter cynical view into possible account.

The date of the departure of the family from Mount Kiera Lodge was fixed; the ship in which they were to sail was decided upon, and accommodation was secured for them by Mr. Meredith. It remained only for Mrs. Pemberton to make the one farewell visit which she meditated; to bid adieu to her servants, and to turn her steps away for ever from the home in which six years had told out for her the history of all the happiness of her woman's life.

That one farewell visit Mrs. Pemberton made, unaccompanied. It was to the cemetery in which her husband had been laid. A handsome Irish cross, in white marble, marked the place of John Pemberton's sepulture; and close beside it was a grave covered with a plain granite slab, which bore the name of Edward Randall. The story of her life lay buried there.

Mary's obedience to her husband's wish was rendered hard to her by the reflection that she could not be laid near him, when the time of rest should come for her.

"Half a world must divide us," she thought, as she stood, her face hidden in her veil, at the foot of the marble cross, "but I am going whither you would have me to go."

A week before the date appointed for the sailing of the Albatross, Mrs. Pemberton, her step-daughter, and the infant (who was named John), with two attendants—of whom one was Bessy West, and the other was a man specially affected to the service of Dick—arrived at Sydney, where they were to live at an hotel until the departure of the ship. Kind, fussy Mr. Meredith was in constant attendance upon the widow of his good friend and client; and Dr. Gray made a point of inspecting the party, and cheering up his recent patient. Ida positively enjoyed this interval; there was so much to see and to do, such a number of indispensable things to be purchased, such novelty and stir. Dr. Gray told her she must profit by it all to lay in a fine stock of cheerfulness and spirits, wherewith to meet the monotony of a long voyage. Ida was not afraid of that. She could not imagine a voyage monotonous; the ocean must have some-

thing wonderful to show every day, and the mere sense of getting on would be delightful.

"Did Mrs. Pemberton know any of their fellow-passengers?" Dr. Gray asked.

"No," she replied, "she thought not. She had not seen a list of their names, but nothing could be less likely than her finding an acquaintance among them."

Ida, who was present, listened to this dialogue with anything but pleasant feelings. There was, then, a list of the passengers made out, and her step-mother might have seen it, had she cared to do so. How fortunate that she had not cared! Ida began to long for the time when the ship should have sailed; when the unpleasantness of the position must indeed be faced, but would be lessened by that very necessity. She had not seen Geoffrey Dale, but she had received a mysteriously-conveyed letter from him that very day, in which he informed her that they should meet on board the Albatross.

On the following day Mr. Meredith took Ida to visit the ship, which was to be her floating home, for a length of time which would seem frightful to the imagination of to-day, when everybody goes everywhere by steamer; but which presented no terrors to the home and colonial minds of comparatively few years ago. She lay out in the matchless harbour, and as the boat in which Ida and Mr. Meredith were rowed to her neared her side, a smaller boat containing one passenger put out from it. The boats passed each other closely, and the single passenger in that one which had put out from the Albatross raised his hat to Miss Pemberton, who bowed hurriedly and blushed violently. But Mr. Meredith was looking over some memoranda of commissions he had undertaken for Mrs. Pemberton, and the bow and the blush passed unnoticed by him.

For all the majestic and mysterious impression which a fine ship cannot fail to make on one to whom such an object is quite novel, Ida shrank from the smallness of the space in it which she found was to be assigned to herself. She hoped there would be no storms, or anything disagreeable, for she was sure she could never bear to be cooped up in that little bit of a "state-room," as they so absurdly called the horrid little den. She was exceedingly perturbed about Dick, who must be much worse off than she, and Mr. Meredith forfeited her good will on the spot by laughing at her, and asking her whether she

had expected to find a loose box and a paddock, among the items of accommodation provided on board the Albatross. She was rather nervous, too, lest Mr. Meredith should ask any questions about the list of passengers, and glad to find that there was no one of official importance for him to talk to. The captain and other officers were "ashore," and no questions were asked of the subordinate functionaries who conducted the visitors through the scene of despairing confusion, which would soon be so trim and orderly.

Two days later the passengers were to embark in the Albatross, and Mrs. Pemberton had arranged to go on board as early as possible. Ida knew that it was Geoffrey Dale's intention to come on board, on the contrary, at the latest moment, when Mrs. Pemberton would be certain to be in her cabin, and he should run no risk of meeting her. Amid the hurry and confusion absolutely inseparable from embarking on a long voyage, no matter how thoroughly everything has been foreseen, prepared, and arranged for, and from which their large party was by no means exempt, Ida was not so much engrossed but that she could discern Geoffrey Dale on the edges of the crowd at the water-side. First she caught a mere glimpse of him, and he was shut out from her sight in an instant; but a little later, and as she was exchanging a few last words with Mr. Meredith, she saw him again—this time distinctly—and saw that his attention was fixed upon the group formed by herself, her step-mother, Mr. Meredith, and Bessy West. Ida was the only one of them whose head was turned in the direction of the place where he stood. "Making sure that we really are going, and that nothing has happened," she thought. And at that moment Bessy West, who had Ida's infant brother in her arms, asked her to tie the strings of the child's hood.

Ida bent over the sleeping baby and tied the strings. Bessy West thanked her, and passed on, following her mistress. Ida looked round towards the spot where Geoffrey Dale had stood, but he was there no longer.

A couple of hours later, when the confusion and bustle of the ship was at its height—when almost everyone who was to sail in the Albatross was on board, and the wiser heads among the number were busily engaged in putting their little dens of probable misery to such "rights" as was possible—when Mrs. Pemberton was

lying in her berth, with her baby on her arms, and Bessy West was dexterously tidying everything before her—Ida, who had been satisfied by a glance at her belongings, made her way on deck, found a comparatively quiet corner, where she seated herself on a coil of rope, and watched the busy scene around her with curiosity and interest; with some suspense too. Had Geoffrey Dale come on board yet? If he had, how soon should she see him? If he had not, how soon would he come? She had asked herself these questions fruitlessly more than once, when she observed a boy making his way through the crowd on the fore part of the ship, and questioning several persons as he went, apparently without result. At length the boy appeared on the after-deck, and then Ida saw him accost an official, in whom she had already learned to recognise the steward, and, taking off his cap, produce a letter out of it. The steward paused, look puzzled, and said, within Ida's hearing:

"Pemberton—Pemberton? Yes, sure, they're aboard."

Ida rose, and went up to the man and the boy.

"I am Miss Pemberton," she said. "Is that anything for me?"

"A letter, ma'am," said the boy. "A gentleman sent me with it, and I thought I should never find you."

"And now you must be off, my lad," said the steward; "for we're going to clear."

"I was to take back something, to let the gentleman know you'd got it, ma'am," said the boy.

Ida had seen in an instant from whom the letter came. She removed the envelope; placed one of her gloves in it; gave the little packet, with some money, to the boy, who went away well pleased; and returned to her quiet corner, to read Geoffrey Dale's letter; while the steward went about his business, a little amused by this addition to his manifold experience of the ways of "spooniness."

"One good-bye is never enough for 'em, when they're as young as that," remarked this sapient observer to himself, and then he thought no more of the matter.

The letter, which was written in pencil, was as follows:

"What will you say when I tell you that, at literally the last moment, I am obliged to relinquish the idea of sailing in the Albatross. No more cruel stroke of

fate has ever hit me than this; but it is too strong for me. I have no time to explain how it has happened, and you would not understand the explanation; in a word, I could not get through some business which I had to attend to in time, and I am forced to remain. I saw you in the crowd, but did not dare to approach you; not because Mrs. Pemberton was there, but because I could not trust myself to speak the farewell which I had come to utter. I shall follow you by the next ship, and shall expect to find a letter from you at the subjoined address. Do not let anything alter or injure for a moment the understanding with which we last parted; I trust to you for that. As things are, however, and as I have lost the opportunity on which I confidently reckoned, I think it will be better for you to avoid any discussion with Mrs. Pemberton—indeed, not to mention me at all. Trust, as I shall trust, to the meeting which is before us in the old world. Would that I could know, that I had only foreseen this, and availed myself of the opportunity which I have lost, to assure myself that you look forward to that meeting with the same feelings as those of G. D."

Ida read these lines several times, and then crept dejectedly back to her narrow quarters. Her interest in the novel scene around her was completely quenched, and her mind was pervaded by a conviction that the Albatross was a horrid prison, and the voyage which was just commencing destined to be unendurably dreary and dismal.

A solitary ship, in mid-ocean, its white sails touched by the silver moonbeams which fall beyond them in a wide glittering track upon the waste of waters. Under the steel-blue sky, on the restless bosom of the beautiful, awful sea, no other object in sight, seemingly in existence, but that silent, gliding ship; grand, even in its littleness, amid the great space; solemn and ghostlike as it moves through the booming waves under the steady heaven-flooding radiance on high. Save for the watch, her decks are solitary, and her human freight is below—sleeping for the most part, all quiet at least.

Mary Pemberton is not sleeping; she lies in her narrow bed, her child upon her arm, listening to the rhythmical rush of the surging waves as they go by the ship; she can see them through the small window of her state-room, where the moonlight

daintily tips them with myriad sparkles of silver light. How beautiful the night is, and how unusually still the ship! The straining, the creaking, the flapping, the innumerable sounds which are inseparable from motion on the great deep, and the management of that floating wonder, a ship, are reduced to a minimum to-night, and the sense of quiet is soothing. Mary is dreaming, though she does not sleep; dreaming of a country that is very far off, and of a waiting figure upon its shore, keeping patient watch for her. And, still dreaming, though she does not sleep, she sees the years of the past go trooping by; they pass before her eyes, float out into the air, and melt into the sparkles upon the waves; a long, long train of them—childhood, girlhood, womanhood, wifehood, motherhood—such is the order in which they pass, and pass away. The faces of the loved long ago, and the lost long ago—father and mother; a sister who died as a young child; a brother whom India slew among its thousands; child-friends; girl-friends; the lover who had been so false to her; the husband who had been so true to her; the home which had been so dear, until, in one moment, it ceased to be home at all, and home meant thenceforth for Mary the unseen land. How strangely it came back to her to-night, as she lay with the sleeping infant nestled in her bosom, an atom in the immensity around! It came back with every detail perfect, every foot of ground, every tree, every room, and piece of furniture. Mary felt as though her mind were roaming independent of her will through all the forsaken scenes of her lost happiness, and recognised with a placid surprise that the journey was not all pain. Such small things came out of the deep shadows of the past and showed themselves to her again, things which might be called trifles, only that there are no trifles in the storehouse of memory where death has set its seal; and, strange to say, they did not torture her, as small things can torture more keenly than the greater, because they tell of the frightful continuous intimacy and clinging presence of ruin and desolation. Mary, wondering, but very placidly, at herself, thought this must be one of the states of mind which she had read of as accompanying bodily weakness. She had been very ill during the early part of the voyage. Yes, it must be so; thus people remembered and mused when the body had less than its usual power over them.

"All my life could not come back to me more uncalled, or more calmly," she thought, "if I were going to him, and knew it, and were just summing it up beforehand."

Then it seemed to Mary that, pressing the infant yet more closely to her breast, she fell asleep, to be aroused by a sudden stir and commotion where all had been so quiet, and to come presently to a confused sense that there was danger somewhere, and all around horrible fear. She found herself in a moment, she knew not how—her child in her arms, and a loose garment wrapped about them both—in the saloon, in the midst of the other passengers, who had been roused, like herself, from peaceful security, with Ida clinging, dumb and terror-stricken, to her; a dreadful clamour of shrieks and weeping breaking the moonlit stillness of the night, and everywhere the awful cry, "Fire! fire!"

A few moments more and they were on the deck, Mary and Ida, and in the terror, and clamour, and confusion, Bessy West found the other two somehow, and so they formed a separate group amid the crowding, tumultuous agony of the scene. Great clouds of smoke, with red, darting tongues of flame leaping hungrily amid their lurid volume, hung about the rigging; the terrible hissing and crackling in which the Fire King delivers his grim sentence of death, sounded in the ears of the doomed passengers. The ship was still moving rapidly through the water, and the moon was still shedding its serene effulgence on the scene. Were all those human creatures to die a terrible death in mid-ocean, on such a night as this, with Heaven's fairest torch-bearer lighting them to their doom? None asked, none knew whence came the death-dealing peril; the fire had been smouldering somewhere for hours, no doubt, and had come stealthily creeping into evidence when its awful and invincible supremacy had grown too sure for remedy, and was gaining new territory too swiftly for combat.

There was no hope of saving the ship. Amid the frightful noise and rushing motion, the unrestrained violence or the cowering abjectness of fear, the knowledge of this fact spread rapidly, and Mary Pemberton understood it at once. "The boats! the boats!" Several of the crew set to work to get the boats out, and with the usual results. A rush, in which women were ruthlessly trampled under foot, or pushed overboard, was made for the first boat that was lowered, and it was swamped, with the

loss of all who had crowded into it. A second boat was lowered with more success, the sailors keeping back the crowd by main force, and, in this instance, some sort of discipline was maintained; while all the time volumes of smoke rolled in blinding masses over the devoted vessel, red flames leaped wildly up from a dozen points at once, the terrific uproar was not lulled for an instant, and the sudden rising of the wind hastened the ravages of the fire, and rendered the danger more hideous.

Mary Pemberton had not uttered a word, since she and Ida and Bessy West had been swept up to the deck of the ship by the force of the clamouring throng pressing out of the saloon. Holding her baby with one arm, the other placed around Ida's half-senseless form, she stood and looked about her with dry, red, haggard eyes, to see whether there was any help or hope. The infant woke and cried, and she mechanically put it to her breast and crooned a few notes to it, and it was pacified by the mother's voice. The officers of the ship were striving to keep order, and to get the women conveyed in safety to the second boat, which had been safely lowered. One of them came up to Mrs. Pemberton, and would have hurried her over the side of the burning ship. She held Ida firmly in her grasp and pressed forward with her, the girl shuddering and moaning.

"Shut your eyes, dearest; do not look, while they lift you," was all she said to Ida. At that moment a man caught hold of Bessy West, and whirled her into the grasp of another who was seconding the efforts of the officers. In a moment she was lowered into the boat, from which a cry arose—"No more, no more, or we shall all be lost!"

Then Mary Pemberton spoke to the officer who was fighting her way to safety for her, and pushed Ida into his arms:

"Make them take one more," she said, "and save her, for God's sake."

At that moment a cry, audible and piercing even amid that clamour, made itself heard; it was uttered by a party of men who were striving to launch the third boat. The fire was too quick and too strong for them; they were cut off from the boat by a barrier of flame and smoke. During that moment, but having

caught the cry and its meaning, Mary Pemberton had wrenched herself away from Ida's hold, and with another hurried entreaty to the officer:

"Save them! they are my children," she placed the infant in Ida's passive arms, tied the shawl in which it was wrapped, sling-fashion, over the girl's shoulder with incredible quickness, and fell back from her just one step. It was enough; the next instant she was struck apart from Ida, and the officer was hurrying his terrified charge over the side. A dozen arms were stretched up to receive Ida, and when she sank down swooning in the boat, as the rowers struck out from the side of the burning ship, down which sparks were falling, and the blazing cordage was dragging in tangled masses, Bessy West supported her on her knees, and gently loosed the baby from its imprisonment.

The strong rowers pulled the crowded boat swiftly away from the ship. All about her the water seemed to be ablaze with red light; and masses of her ruins, with human beings clinging to them, floated and tumbled about in the waves. When the boat was nearly a mile from the blazing hulk that had been the stately Albatross, and in the middle of the moon-track, the rowers lay-to upon their oars, and they and the people in the boat gazed at her in silence, appalled. They had escaped from the fiery death which was devouring her, but to what fate?

The ship burned with extraordinary fierceness and rapidity, and the people in the boat still looked on, appalled; until, with a terrific explosion, she was rent asunder, and the severed portions were scattered far and wide over the surface of the ocean.

A minute later, and before the terrified survivors in the boat had drawn breath again, there glided into sight, across the moon track, and at no very great distance from them, a sail!

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